

March 2, 2012

Dear District Superintendent, School Board President, and Teachers' Union/Association Leader:

In order to prepare our young people for an increasingly competitive global economy, the United States must do more to ensure that teaching is highly respected and supported as a profession; that accomplished, effective teachers are guiding students' learning in every classroom; and that schools are dynamic and innovative workplaces in which all employees are working toward the goal of improving student outcomes and closing achievement gaps. Teachers possess the same intrinsic motivation and enthusiasm for sharing knowledge and facilitating learning as generations past, but should have new, modern advantages to support their success. Despite the tight budgets which we find ourselves working with, we need innovative and reform-oriented districts to lead the way when it comes to transforming the teaching profession.

The U.S. Department of Education is working in collaboration with the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association, the National School Boards Association, the American Association of School Administrators, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Council of the Great City Schools, and the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service to sponsor a conference in **Cincinnati, Ohio**, on **Collaborating to Transform the Teaching Profession**. We are inviting States and districts to participate in this conference. This event will commence on the afternoon of **May 23, 2012**, and conclude on the afternoon of **May 24, 2012**. National foundations and support organizations will join us to support our efforts in fostering these important relationships. We extend many thanks to the Ford Foundation and the GE Foundation for their support of the conference.

All teams that register are expected to present and participate in the "Transformers' Dialogue," an event designed to showcase the work being done by – and to build networks among – all State and district participants. On Day One, all attendees will showcase and share their accomplishments and plans for transforming the profession in an exhibition-like setting. On Day Two, teams will attend breakout sessions led by highlighted practitioners and experts. Toward the end of the event, teams will have opportunities to reflect on and improve their own plans.

While we are inviting all States and districts to participate, we expect attendees that are earnestly working collaboratively toward reforms that will increase student achievement by transforming the teaching profession. The costs of travel and accommodations will be provided for your three required district team members. If you are a district that attended the conference last year in Denver – or you wanted to attend but were not selected in the lottery – preference will be given to you if you are interested in attending.

If you would like to attend, we ask three things of you. First, the superintendent, the teachers' union or association leader, and the school board president must agree to attend the event together (no substitutions permitted). Second, your team must jointly prepare and present at the conference your district's plan for collaboratively transforming the teaching profession; you will share this work at the "Transformers' Dialogue," a session at the conference that is designed to showcase the work being done by – and to build networks among – State and district

participants. And third, you must pledge to work collaboratively to improve student achievement through your collective bargaining agreement or other jointly developed district policies and related labor-management practices.

You may download the RSVP form and the preliminary conference agenda from this Web site: <http://www.ed.gov/labor-management-collaboration>. If you are interested in attending, please complete the RSVP form (including all three required signatures) and return it to us by 5:00 p.m. ET on March 30, 2012. If we are oversubscribed, we will randomly select attendees from among those who RSVP; you will receive final confirmation of your attendance no later than April 6, 2012. If you have any questions, please e-mail us at collaboration2012@ed.gov.

I hope you share my excitement for this convening and are interested in participating.

Sincerely,

/s/

Arne Duncan

District RSVP Form

Conference on “Collaborating to Transform the Teaching Profession”

Background:

District Name _____ State: _____

NCES (Federal LEA) ID _____

Union or Association Affiliation: ☐ NEA ☐ AFT ☐ Both NEA & AFT ☐ Other: ____

The pledge below must be signed by your district’s Superintendent, School Board President, and Teachers’ Union or Association Leader.*

Statement of Intent:

We pledge to attend the conference as a team, to prepare and present at the conference our district’s plan for collaboratively transforming the teaching profession, and to work to improve student achievement through our collective bargaining agreement or other jointly developed district policies and related labor-management practices.

Superintendent (or equivalent):

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

Teacher’s Union or Association Leader:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

School Board President (or equivalent):

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

Additional Information:

Any other member of your district delegation:*

Name: _____

Title: _____

E-mail: _____

* Please note that the U.S. Department of Education is only able to cover the travel and lodging costs of up to three members of a district delegation. If you wish to bring an additional team member, that person’s travel and lodging will be at his or her own expense. The maximum number of individuals on any district delegation is four people.

Please return this completed form by fax to (202) 205-0676 “Attention: Collaboration” or scan and e-mail this form to Collaboration2012@ed.gov.

To be considered, your RSVP must arrive by 5:00 p.m. ET on March 30, 2012.

Preliminary Conference Agenda
Collaborating to Transform the Teaching Profession
Cincinnati, Ohio – May 23-24, 2012

Sponsored by:

U.S. Department of Education in collaboration with the American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Council of the Great City Schools, the American Association of School Administrators, the National School Boards Association, and the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service

[Note: Event start and end times subject to change.]

Day One – May 23, 2012

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|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1:00-2:00 p.m. | Opening Plenary
<i>Leaders will discuss the past year's challenges and progress in collaborating to transform the teaching profession in the service of increasing students' success. They will share an emerging, shared vision that describes what a transformed teaching profession that increases student achievement could look like – and will engage in honest reflection and critical questioning about how to get there.</i> |
| 2:15-5:15 p.m. | Transformers' Dialogue
<i>An exhibit area will be set up "gallery walk" style, and all participating districts and States will host poster sessions on their work. Attendees will use this time to visit one another, network, share, and learn.</i> |
| 5:30-6:00 p.m. | End of Day Plenary
<i>A town hall meeting will highlight ideas shared during the Transformers' Dialogue.</i> |
| 6:30-8:00 p.m. | Networking Dinner |

Day Two – May 24, 2012

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|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8:00-9:30 a.m. | Transformation in Practice – Breakout Session I
<i>A variety of breakout sessions will meet diverse State and district needs:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Selected district teams will highlight their work and address questions.</i>• <i>Selected State teams will highlight their work and address questions.</i>• <i>Workshops led by subject matter experts will address key topics of interest.</i> |
| 9:45-11:15 a.m. | Transformation in Practice – Breakout Session II
<i>Session I breakouts will be repeated, allowing participants to attend two.</i> |
| 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. | Accelerating Transformation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• State Session:
<i>State teams will meet with district teams from the State to discuss how the State can help accelerate the wide-scale transformation of the teaching profession.</i> |

- Supporter Session:

Foundations, national organizations, and other supporters will discuss their role in supporting districts' work to transform the teaching profession.

12:30-2:00 p.m.

Team Reflection and Action Planning (boxed lunch)

Conference attendees will meet in small groups with their own State or district team members to discuss and reflect on what they learned and what their next steps will be.

2:00-2:30 p.m.

Closing Plenary

Transformers' Dialogue – Guidance Document

An essential part of this year's conference is a three-hour "Transformers' Dialogue" that will provide time and space for teams of leaders to share their visions, strategies, and plans for increasing student achievement by transforming teaching into a 21st-century profession. For some teams, this may mean sharing a plan that you have already created; for others it may mean generating something new to receive feedback on at the conference. Your team might find the following guidance useful as you prepare to showcase your ideas during the exhibition.

Guiding Questions:

There are no set elements for what must be included, but the following questions are intended to provide further guidance on the kind of work with which we hope districts and States will share their best thinking and practices.

- What are your team's plans for improving the way your district or State attracts, supports, advances, rewards, and compensates teachers? This might include development or enhancement of policies that address:
 - Innovative ways to create meaningful career ladders
 - Progressive, performance-based compensation systems
 - Shared accountability for student outcomes
 - Peer assistance and review
 - Changing school culture (i.e., moving from an industrial model to a 21st-century culture that embraces innovation, flexibility, and empowerment)
 - Raising the bar for earning tenure
 - Lifting the voices of accomplished and effective teachers
 - Teacher roles and responsibility for school administration and planning
 - Teacher evaluation systems based on multiple measures of student outcomes
 - Alternative staffing patterns and work schedules (e.g., longer school year or school day)
 - More time for collaboration and more opportunities for job-embedded professional development during the school year
 - Redesigning shared decision making and bargaining processes
- How have you defined collaboration in your State or district?
- What is the role of collaboration in your current plan? What role has it played to date and how do you envision sustaining it in the future?
- What are your student achievement results over time? Are there leading or lagging indicators that demonstrate that a given policy or initiative connected to transforming the teaching profession impacted student outcomes?

Suggested Plan Elements:

The following are some suggested elements that might be useful to others as you share your plan.

- *Goals*
- *Strategies for Reaching Goals*
- *Role of Collaboration*
- *Measures of Success*
- *Progress: Results or Milestones Reached*
- *Challenges and Solutions*

Presentation Elements (Required):

In addition to your written plan, several elements are *required* to ensure that plans are effectively shared in the poster session forum provided at the conference.

- Poster
 - We will provide each team with a foam poster board approximately 40” by 60” (with a stand) on which to present its plan.
 - Suggested use of board space might include pinning six or seven 8”x10” pages onto the board (Microsoft Word or PowerPoint might be useful in creating these) or printing a large poster (again using PowerPoint) that will cover the surface of the foam board provided.
- Handouts
 - We ask that all teams provide a one-page handout that summarizes key elements of the plan and can act as a takeaway document for other attendees. This will help attendees to share, reflect, and act on the ideas that your team has proposed.
 - Please be sure to include your team’s contact information on the handout. This is an opportunity to share ideas, network, and collaborate!